

Point Three



The Toc H magazine
April 1979 10p

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MILL HILL MUSIC CLUB

(feature page 4)

Point Three

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Letters and articles are welcomed and should be addressed to the Toc H Editorial Office, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Bucks HP22 6BT (Telephone: 0296 623911). Opinions expressed (including the editorial) are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Toc H Movement.

Point Three is available from the Toc H Publications Department, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Bucks HP22 6BT (Telephone: 0296 623911). Single copies 10p. Annual subscription: £1.20 including postage.

The cover picture of Dame Janet Baker is by Ibbs and Tillett Ltd, Wigmore Street, London. (See article on Mill Hill Branch and its Music Club in this issue.)

Last month's cover picture was wrongly captioned and we apologise to the photographer, Aled Oldfield. It was one of Aled's pictures of a project at Coed Du Hospital in N Wales showing Karen and Peter moving part of Llanarmon's fund raising gear into the hospital.



Toc H seeks to create friendship and understanding among people of all backgrounds and beliefs. Local group activities range from holidays for the handicapped and children's playschemes to arts festivals and even bird-watching. Toc H is short for Talbot House: the soldiers' club in Belgium founded by the Reverend 'Tubby' Clayton in 1915. Today Toc H provides opportunities for people to test the relevance of practical Christianity and we welcome anyone who would like to give us a try.

Members accept a four-fold commitment:

1. To build friendships across the barriers that divide man from man.
2. To give personal service.
3. To find their own convictions while always being willing to listen to the views of others.
4. To work for the building of that better world which has been called the Kingdom of God.

This magazine, which acts as a forum for ideas about Toc H and about the world in which we live, takes its title from the third of these Four Points – to think fairly.

From the Editor

WHAT THE DICKENS NEXT?

One of the problems of writing these monthly notes is that they have to be done such a long time before you read them. I am drafting this, for example, in mid February! However, on this one occasion, it does give me an excuse to write about a man I greatly admire and whose birthday I have just been celebrating. Just 167 years ago, at 387 Mile End Road, Landport, Portsmouth, Charles Dickens was born.

Now, that's a long time ago. George III was still king of England and another quarter of a century was to pass before Victoria reached the throne. Nevertheless, I believe that Charles Dickens has much to tell us today. I want to mention in particular two aspects of his work – his social analysis and the characters he created.

The social comment in his novels seems to me generally to hit the right nail precisely on its head. Whether he is just telling a good story (as in *Oliver Twist*) or seriously analysing social evils (as in *Bleak House* or *Hard Times* or indeed any of the later novels), he always reaches the heart of the matter in the end. Always, he comes back to the essential dignity and value of every man, the personal responsibility of each of us for his own acts, the wide ranging results to others of what we do, our great dependence on each other. Men make things go wrong and only by changing ourselves can we make them go more right. The selfishness, greed, envy and pride of all of us are much more responsible for suffering and evil than are abstractions like capitalism and socialism or transitory forms of organisation like political parties. The law itself is made good or evil in its effects by the men who administer it.

Then, Dickens knew intuitively what men are. G K Chesterton once pointed out that most 19th century novelists took enormous pains to copy exactly the manners and style of the men and the world around them. Some of these became 'fashionable' novelists and their work has faded in significance as fashions and styles have changed. As their world moves farther away from us, the men and women in their books lose clarity for us. But Dickens did not copy those around him: he *created* his greatest characters, building them around those human qualities and failings and springs of action that will last as long as men last. Wordsworth, when he was an old man, said: 'If my writings are to last . . . they will please for the single reason that "we all of us have one heart".' That is the secret of the immortality of Charles Dickens' great gallery of characters.

Appearance, manners, styles, all change with time: the spirit and mind of man do not. We can make ourselves better or worse, but essentially our nature stays the same. All we need is a sense of perspective. Nowadays, 'equality' is all the rage but in chasing it we tend to forget that there are forms of snobbishness that have nothing to do with money or 'class', yet are just as foolish. Most of us today would feel ashamed to consider ourselves superior to a Bermondsey 'bin man' or a West Indian railway guard. Yet we all feel superior without any shame to a man who lived in the Middle Ages or in Victorian times. The simple fact is that, once we get our perspective right, we see that men and women of all types and of all times have all the really important things in common: only in small, unimportant ways are we different and many of these are recent habits or passing fashions, or literally 'skin deep'.

That is what Charles Dickens understood. We ordinary chaps get muddled because we've got our perspective wrong so that people nearer to us seem larger and clearer than those who are farther away. Because Dickens did not make that mistake, he is not a fashionable novelist but a writer for all time. Dean Inge used to point out in my young days that those who marry the present, divorce the future. Or, put another way, the nearer you get to this year's fashions, the more you are out of touch with next year's. I think that Dr Norman was saying something of the kind in his recent Reith Lectures.

POINT THREE

We are all struggling to do our best with the paper and printing process we started to use in February. Please be patient – we'll get it right in the end! After all, the contents are more important than the wrapping. Please keep writing to let me know what you think of both. I welcome the letters I receive protesting against something I have written or some contribution I have published and I print them where I can. I am surprised, though, to be told from time to time that some feature which riles my correspondent or expresses a political or religious conviction he doesn't share *should not be published!* An important element in the Toc H way of life is to treat the views of others with respect, even – perhaps particularly – when we disagree with them. What do you think?

FGR

In Brief...

● Recently, a full house greeted the Mayor and Mayoress of Christchurch when they arrived at the Bournemouth and Christchurch Branch's seventh birthday party, held at the Toc H centre in Iford. The guest speaker was John Forbes who spoke movingly of his development work in Poperinge. Reg Collins presided at the evening and gave an encouraging 'state of branch' report. The jigsaw puzzle library was clearly meeting a need with some 3,000 puzzles circulating among 70 people; their taped news service for the blind was reaching 30 people each week; a whole range of work among senior citizens had been carried on during the year. The whole evening attracted strong representation from branches in the New Forest, South Dorset and Wessex Districts.

● Hartley Wintney (Hants) Men's Branch have written to tell us something of their activities. The branch has been in existence for nearly 50 years and its members are fortunate enough to live in a village with a long history of neighbourliness. Two years ago, in co-operation with the PCC, they launched a Community Care Group. This group co-ordinates the work of the many voluntary bodies and individuals working in the area and has attracted a steady flow of volunteers — many of them younger people new to the district. I was interested to learn that the branch — very well known in the area — visits each house on the new estates springing up round the village to introduce themselves and ensure that all newcomers know what is going on around them.

● Our Weymouth (Dorset) District correspondent, Ethel Buchanan, has just updated us on the Weymouth Toc H Hospital Broadcasting Service. During all this winter's atrocious weather, not once has any of the programme makers failed to turn up. Their star winter story is of one of their disc jockeys who had to reach Weymouth from Portland on a day of snow and gales when the causeway was under water and impassable. Eventually he called on some naval friends for help and arrived in Weymouth by sea — and on time! The service gets a steady fan mail and this year received 63 Christmas cards from happy customers. Weymouth think they have the youngest regular disc jockey in Toc H Hospital broadcasting. Nafisa Sayany has been with them almost two years and started at the age of 13: any challenges to that record?



Over 100 patients from Eassey Hospital were entertained recently by Deal and Walmer Joint Branch. The 'Eassey Boys' as the branch members have come to know them enjoyed a sumptuous tea and were later given a film show. Deal Toc H members have a long association with the

hospital and the patients, most of whom are mentally or physically handicapped, have been enjoying the parties for many years. Another such event takes place in July each year on Deal Carnival day when the 'Boys' come into town to watch the procession.



Photo: Bucks Advertiser

In July 1978, we reported the second stage of the Buckingham Branch 'fun bug' saga. John Perry and Dave Childs took part in the Lombard RAC Rally and the Buckingham and District Motor Club organised a sponsorship scheme to raise money for another individually designed

'fun bug'. Well, here it is, with its happy new owner. Nicola was born with brittle bones. Because she can't support her own weight without breaking bones, she has never been able to go out on her own. Now, she can go out to play with her friends.

Mill Hill Branch and its Music Club

by Wilfred Ransom

For many years Mill Hill Branch has operated a film unit service for local hospitals and old peoples' homes. This service is carried out in the winter months and of course the hire of films alone costs a great deal of money.

Twenty five years ago, the branch decided as an additional means of raising money for this purpose to start a series of classical music concerts and one snowy evening in February we heard a piano recital in a local church hall. The artist was Henryk Mierowski, a Polish pianist living in England, and for that initial concert the audience was 300. This was encouraging and so other concerts were arranged with Denis Matthews, Eileen Joyce, Leon Goossens, Julian Bream; all proved very successful.

As the Church Hall could hold only 300 or so, we took another chance and went to a local school where we had an audience of some 600; this enabled us to broaden our horizons and engage international artists. Annie Fischer and the Amadeus String Quartet were amongst the first and we went from strength to strength with audiences overflowing the school hall. Jacqueline du Pre, Sir Adrian Boult, Teresa Berganza, Yehudi Menuhin and many others came and played for us. Sir Geraint Evans gave an unforgettable concert as did Vladimir Ashkenazy in his first recital in England just after he had left Russia.

Before and after each concert at this school we had to hump the chairs to and from the classrooms into the hall and this in the end proved too onerous so we started to look round for other premises. The Borough of Barnet in which the branch is situated has no or Concert Hall so it became necessary to go out of the district. The Headmaster of Haberdashers' Askes School at Elstree offered us the use of the fine school hall which holds some 700 and we spent a very happy time there for a few years. Haberdashers School is in the Hertfordshire countryside where in the spring and summer it is delightful but the dark nights of winter along the country lanes posed problems. During this period, we heard Rubinstein, the then newly formed Trio of Daniel Barenboim, Jacqueline du Pre and Pinchas Zukerman, The English Chamber Orchestra and Murray Perelha, Alfred Brendel and The Academy of St Martins and many other international artists.

Now we are at our permanent home, the Civic Hall, Borehamwood, where for the last four years we have had many happy evenings. One unforgettable evening was a very foggy night in November 1977 when James Galway and the Zagreb Soloists were booked to come to us. They were in Ireland and on the morning of the concert we received a wire to say that they were grounded by fog at Dublin and intended to make their way by coach to Belfast to catch a plane at 5.15 pm to Heathrow, reaching our hall by 7.45 pm. Just before going to the hall we received another message. Because of Customs delay they had arrived at Belfast Airport just in time to see the tail lights of the 5.15 pm plane disappearing down the runway: they had to wait until the next and last plane, the 8.15 pm. With already a very full house it became necessary to tell the audience what had happened and ask for their indulgence. We had a progress report from Belfast Airport who told us they had seen one bearded musician plus 14 other gentlemen and one lady board the plane. In the end they arrived at 10.30 pm going straight on the platform and playing until 00.15 on the Sunday morning: only 60 of the 800 present went home before the end, by reason of baby sitters and lack of personal transport. It was a traumatic experience but very well worth it for it underlined our strength in having such a splendid and loyal following.

And now (at the time of writing) we are in two weeks time due to have our Silver Jubilee Concert with Dame Janet Baker singing to us: all tickets are sold. We have received many messages of goodwill and congratulations from the artists who all remark on the uniqueness and the happy informality of our music club. We receive no grant, local or national, and get by through our own efforts and those of our public. Of course we have our ups and downs — especially financially for we pay the full fees of the artists and the hire of the Steinway pianos comes to over £110 each time a pianist is on the programme. Once we were badly in the red and so we wrote a letter more in hope than certainty to a very well known musician who had played for us on previous occasions asking if he would kindly give a recital just for the love of it and thus save our music club. The reply came instantly and this talented pianist duly came and played and by so doing put us back on an even keel.

One of the features of the club is the happy rapport between organisers, artists and public and we are certain that this is the secret of our success. We never put a price on the programmes but ask the audience to give what they like and people are most generous.

Plans are already completed for the 1979-80 season and shortly we shall start on those for 1980-81 for these international artists have to be booked

months ahead. We aim high and intend to maintain our sights for that is the only way to continue. It is not a big money spinner but it has made Toc H known all over the country and indeed the world for we often hear from the artists and they discuss these concerts with their international colleagues. The writer was in a music shop in Seattle last year and upon discussing certain records he was informed by the manager of the shop that he had heard of our concerts through an artist living in the Seattle area. In order to try to offset the heavy costs of our activities we have been running a bookstall for the last two and a half years on Mill Hill Broadway for three hours each Saturday morning. This is the brain wave of our chairman, Douglas Parker, and it certainly pays dividends for generally we get between £15 and £25 a week. The books, paperbacks included, are given to us by our friends, amongst them many members of the music club, and we sell them at 10p - 20p a time. We are now part and parcel of the Mill Hill scene and the great thing is that we keep our image with the public. We are only a small branch in numbers but having sown well in former years we reap a number of harvests, not the least of which is the tremendous goodwill shown towards us.

We can highly commend to other Districts and branches the idea of running a series of concerts for although they often make for ulcers, sleepless nights and frustration, to persevere brings its own rewards. Our advice would be to aim high and continue to do so. The financial rewards may not be all that high but the effort is so well worth while for it does help to keep the name of Toc H before the public.

I had the privilege of being present at the Silver Jubilee Concert. Dame Janet Baker, accompanied on the piano by Geoffrey Pratley, held the audience of 1,000 people spellbound for two hours — an accomplishment in itself. However, the intimacy of the occasion cannot be described. Only a supreme artist and a warm sympathetic audience can bring about such an atmosphere, and of course this is why the music club is known throughout the world. Janet Baker gave herself to the occasion — not just her sublime voice, but the personality behind it. After singing songs by Mendelssohn, Faure, Debussy and Delius, she paid tribute to the work of the music club and particularly to Wilf Ransom, the secretary. She said that the good wishes received from performers all over the world looked like a Musical 'Who's Who'.

There are all sorts of reasons why this kind of initiative coming from Toc H is a good thing — but the best one is the obvious friendships that have been generated over 25 years among people who might not otherwise meet.

John Hull

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BRITISH GAS



From the Director

Ken Prideaux-Brune



I had the joy and privilege of being invited by Peter East to accompany him when he went to Buckingham Palace to receive his MBE – and to a party afterwards given by his friends and neighbours in Spitalfields. To move from the friendly but formal splendour of a major occasion at Buckingham Palace to the Cockney warmth and vitality of the people who live on the Brune House (no relation so far as I know) estate in the Spitalfields area of the East End of London was an experience I shall always treasure. The sense of community on that that estate is immediately apparent and caring for each other is an important, and totally unselfconscious, part of that sense of community. It's not something called service or some similar high sounding name. It's simply the natural and obvious thing to do. Two ladies were only alive and able to come to the party because two people decided at the start of the cold weather that they would visit all the elderly people living on the estate every day and make sure they were all right. These two had collapsed but the visitors arrived in time to get medical treatment. Caring comes naturally to them and it is also fun. Their humour is as much a part of their caring as of everything else they do. Here is a living – and lively – example of the kind of good neighbourliness which Toc H exists to create and encourage. No more appropriate place to celebrate Peter's award could be imagined.

A visit to Nottingham provided John Hull and me with an opportunity to meet the Rev Patrick Vaughan, Principal of the East Midlands Joint Ordination Training Scheme. This is one of several schemes initiated in the last few years which gives people the chance of

training for ordination in their spare time while continuing in their present employment. This course is sponsored by the Anglican Church in co-operation with the Department of Adult Education, but is open to students of any denomination. What particularly interested me about our talk, however, was that it emerged that several of those taking this course are not intending to be ordained. They are laymen taking a theological and pastoral training in order that they may become more effective in their ministry as laymen. This seems to me a very exciting and encouraging development. To undertake a course of this kind is obviously a very major commitment, but I think there may well be members of Toc H who would be interested in this kind of lay training. Courses are available in several parts of the country.

* * *

Back to the East End. I recently received a copy of a terrifying book on racial violence in the East End of London. It's called *Blood on the Streets*. That may be dismissed as simply an emotive title, but the book makes it clear that it is no more than a statement of fact. A list (and it's only a selection) of attacks on Bengali residents of Tower Hamlets in the past two and a half years – just a couple of lines to each incident – runs to 13 pages. No Bengali is safe on the streets of Tower Hamlets – or for that matter in their homes. 'Particular estates', says the book, 'sometimes for a relatively short period, sometimes more permanently, become known as "no-go" areas among the Asian community because of their reputation for racial intimidation.'

The Bengali people are, by tradition and nature, remarkably peace-loving. There are signs that the long saga of violence and the inability – and, it seems to them, the unwillingness – of the police to protect them are leading some members of the community to form 'vigilante' groups and to fight back. The story presented in this book is not a pretty one, but it does help us to realise the extent to which our fellow members working with the Bengali community in the East End of London are in 'the front line'.

The book, perhaps inevitably, presents a one-sided picture. There is no mention of the positive work done by Toc H, Avenues Unlimited and others. Nor of the heartening extent of acceptance of Bengali families on the Brune House estate. Nonetheless no one who knows Tower Hamlets doubts that the picture presented in this book is in general accurate as well as terrifying. *Blood on the Streets* costs £1 and can be obtained from Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, 58 Watney Street, London E1.

Encouraging signs by George Lee

It is pretty certain that if one had had a Marks Conference a few years ago there would have been crystal clear lines along which everyone would consider a Mark had to tread in order to win the approval of the then Marks Committee, the CEC, or any other such governing body. The other weekend, representatives of most of the Marks and Centres across the country met together under the Chairmanship of the Director to share news and views and consider their position within the work of the Movement.

Two very exciting factors emerged from the weekend together.

First and foremost perhaps emerged the fact that there is no longer a 'party line' and each Mark, each Centre, is in itself a separate experiment in working out Toc H in its community. In fact there were times when it appeared that the only thing we had in common was the name 'Toc H' – and yet the sincerity and the initiative with which the various folk involved were most successfully working out a useful witness in their particular community was so much in evidence.

The second fact that emerged was the strength and vitality and deep conviction of those young people to whom we have entrusted (very wisely) the future of our Marks and Centres.

In the past there have of course been not only those who would be prepared to 'knock' the Marks, with or without provocation or personal experience, but also those who deeply and sincerely felt that very little of the work that Toc H does required the use of a freehold property. The former critics will probably always be with us, and can always be answered; the latter have proved their point in that the purpose of Marks and Centres must certainly be measured far above the simple matter of owning property.

The evidence of the conference at Doi Knap, whilst certainly not indicating that all is milk and honey or plain sailing is sufficient to indicate that our present quota of Marks and Centres are doing a fine job, and are worthy of our consideration and support and encouragement, indeed we ourselves should be encouraged by the knowledge that each of those Marks and Centres is not trying to measure up to a pattern determined by somebody or some outside group of bodies, but is faithfully witnessing to the claims of the Movement in a very personal and individual way. Remember the Centres at Birmingham and Cardiff in your prayers, and thank God for them.



John Rowe of Accrington, who recently celebrated his 90th birthday. John served on the Western Front in World War I and then in Constantinople. He is a native of Clitheroe where for many years he carried on business as a bespoke tailor. But he came to Accrington 36 years ago and settled there, transferring his active Toc H membership which had started in Clitheroe in 1937.

Wider Family



Last summer Edgar and Joan Stickley (Wyre Forest (Worcs) Joint Branch) spent some two months in New Zealand. They had a great welcome there and came back with a strong impression of the value Toc H New Zealand sets on being a part of the Wider Family. They are all working hard there to 'maintain and extend the Light in a country that has problems akin to those found here at home'. The picture shows (L to R) Phil Liner (a leading radio personality and Toc H New Zealand's Hon Commissioner), Joan, Edgar and Jean Liner.

Family Matters

by Gina Vianney



BE YOUR OWN BAKER

A most peculiar tipped scale has developed in the relations between people who push goods on to the public, and those who consume them. Any suspicion that there is something wrong with the goods, and angry commerce says, 'Prove it. Prove to us that what we sell is harmful'.

As victims of some of the most ghastly, money making tragedies in history, from thalidomide to pornography, the public surely has the right to say, 'Prove to us that it isn't'.

The fact is any anyone obsessed with the money motive will commit murder if not restrained. The public has to defend itself and its dependants. That's the world we live in. When the principle applies to food, which we shovel into our families and guests at a colossal rate per year, we need to stop, ask, and examine exactly what we are buying, preparing and eating, beginning with our basic loaf of bread.

White bread, as sold widely and advertised expensively, supported by women's magazines and cookery clubs, recommended to pensioners and invalids, is a mass produced swindle. It isn't bread at all. The wheat is robbed of its essential nutrients, the absence of which, in the human body, has been found to contribute to heart disease, nervous disorder, fatigue, stress and a dozen other ailments. Chemicals are added to make it white and keep it edible longer. Then, if we are health conscious, we can go and buy separately all the things we need that they have taken out — wheat germ, bran, vitamins, minerals and medicines.

As a woman who refuses to be bullied by modern commerce, I make my own bread. Stone ground whole wheat flour has all the essential factors, as God provided them, in the proper balance for body chemistry which includes digestion. Accompanied by fruit, milk and eggs, it gives all a human needs to stay healthy, energetic, able to take stress. It is all food, which is more than can be said for many dressed up imitations we see on supermarket shelves.

There is absolutely no waste. It satisfies the appetite, so you eat less. It has a dozen varieties of presentation as a meal. It also relieves the home cook of a basic insecurity as to whether she is feeding her charges properly.

As a new operation any woman needs a clear day to master the art of bread making. You need a good 2½ hours in the house, but can of course get on with other jobs while the bread is proving and baking. I write letters, or make notes, with a clock near my eye. I lost several batches at first, and am still prepared for flops, but after four years would never go back to the old way. White bread we eat in other people's houses.

Making bread is relaxing; good for the nerves. Sit with your feet up while it's rising. Get rid of all your suppressed anger, frustration and defeated ambition by giving it a good thumping when you knead. Take it out on the dough for all the petty strife and swallowed insults, all the worries and despair. The satisfaction of the result will make you feel like a Queen.

The process is fraught with mistakes, mind you. Put yeast in the fridge to keep and you can kill it. Leave the dough to rise too long and it collapses, never to rise again. Concentration is essential, and patience. Good spiritual exercise.

Children of this generation have been deprived of so many family traditions. Ever suspicious, the family may resent a change; they may find 'natural' bread heavy at first, but once the palate is adjusted, there are no complaints.

And who is *not* lured by the smell of bread in the oven; hot butter on delicious buns? It is delicious. Like milk, eggs and butter, home baked goes off quickly, but it can be kept in the fridge after it has cooled. Rub butter on top of the crust while it is hot to soften it. For parties or visitors it makes a sound, firm basis for fish, cheeses, etc, cut into fingers, Danish style. Dipped both sides in egg, almost any left over shape can be fried in oil and used up with bacon or grills. Toasted, it has a nutty substance to it that makes a quick snack meal.

Commerce doesn't want us cutting out the middle man, using simple natural resources, as fresh from the earth as possible. The devil doesn't want us a healthy nation, defeating poverty. God's providence reaching our homes. Anyone attempting such a programme encounters opposition, discouragement, even jealousy and derision. Patience and perseverance win the day. The results are well worth while.

'Advise, assist and befriend'

by Richard Green

As his car slowly crawls in the morning rush hour past the Corporation Street tower blocks and into New Road, the Probation Officer makes a mental note he must get his case records up to date. His senior officers will want them in three weeks time for his annual inspection, and the secretary will need them a week to get them typed up. 'B... paperwork!' he sighs to himself. The car pauses at a set of traffic lights. His eyes flit along the derelict row of shops to his left: apparently they are going to put the Ring Road extension through here — eventually. Further down stands the Black Boar public house, equally tattered and ramshackle, as if still suffering from last night's hangover. Here, as darkness falls, gathers the fraternity of the twilight zone: prostitutes, pimps, punters — and the vice squad. The stench of stale beer passes fleetingly through the car as it draws away from the lights.

Battle torn

The Probation Officer walks from the car park into the offices of the Midshires Probation and After Care Service, and goes direct to the daily allocation meeting. 'Morning, John'. *
'Hi, Mary. Have a good weekend?'
'Not bad. And you?'

'I went to a disco in Brum last night. Now I feel like something the cat brought home this morning. It'll teach me a lesson, I suppose.'

Mary chuckles in her knowing, grandmotherly fashion, as she stubs out her cigarette in a nearby ashtray. John smiles to himself, for he knows what is coming next. After 28 years as a probation officer, there isn't much Mary doesn't know about anything. Shell shocked from years of assisting, and befriending, she exhibits the battle torn soldier's air of proud serenity, brimming with tales of past campaigns. Her chuckle develops into a coughing fit, at which she reaches for a bottle of cough mixture from her handbag, takes a spoonful, and then lights up another Woodbine.

'When you've been in this job as long as I have, my dear, you'll learn to take your pleasures on Saturday nights, not Sundays,' she chuckles again. In doing so, she brings her hand to her mouth in anticipation of the usual coughing fit, but this time it fails to materialise. Heaving a sigh of relief, she turns her attention to Mike, who has just walked into the coffee room, where the allocation meeting is to take place.

Decorum and fashion

Mike is the Senior Probation Officer — young, fresh faced, trendily dressed, his hair cut meticulously to that length which compromises between the Services' demand for decorum and the requirement of fashion. Naturally, as a young Senior Probation Officer out to prove himself, he is go-ahead and keen. But he must not appear too keen: that would not go down well with colleagues. With this, as with everything else, he had instinctively found the medium way: a true Senior Probation Officer.

'Hello, Mike', chirps Mary. 'I managed to get that chap into a hostel finally on Friday. A quarter to five he came in: said he'd been released from Lincoln prison and decided to come here looking for work at the last minute. I don't know what, because we can't find work for those already here, never mind about anybody else.'

'Never learn, do they?'

Mike makes no reply, but shuffles quickly through a pile of papers.

Probation for shoplifting

'What have we got this morning, Mike?' inquires John, keen to get started.

The UK probation service

The probation service is an essential element in the American and British penal systems. It grew from the long standing practice of binding over an offender to be of good behaviour, was introduced for the first time in Massachusetts in 1878 and was legally recognised in England by the 1907 Probation of Offenders Act. Since 1925, any court in England, Wales or N Ireland has been able to make a probation order on an offender and every court has had probation service back up: currently such an order must cover a period between six months and three years. Before making an order, the court is obliged to explain just what it means and to be satisfied that the offender understands that, should he break any condition of the order, the court may deal with him again for the original offence. In England and Wales, the orders may be used only with offenders over the age of 17 and require their consent; in N Ireland, the minimum age is 14.

The purpose of the probation service is

to help the offender to make good under supervision while continuing a normal life in the community. The probationer is required to keep in regular touch with the probation officer assigned to him, to lead an industrious life and to be 'of good behaviour'. In some cases, he may also be ordered to live in a specified place or to undergo mental treatment.

In England and Wales, the service is run by probation and after care committees comprising local magistrates and co-opted members. In N Ireland, it is administered by the N Ireland Office. Scotland has no separate probation service: probationers and offenders needing after care are supervised by selected social workers.

Probation officers are trained nationally and the training is long and comprehensive. They are appointed locally, normally as members of small teams, though each one has considerable personal freedom in how he handles his own clients. The role of the probation officer is difficult and

wide ranging. He must 'advise, assist and befriend' his probationers. Often he must deal with their families too (this is always the case with juveniles) because he needs to discover what underlies the offence.

He mustn't nurse his clients because this non-institutional form of training aims at strengthening the probationer's independence and enabling him to overcome by his own efforts any problems arising from his weaknesses or his environment. There are occasions, too, when the client needs to change his environment. Additionally, probation officers usually accept after care work as part of their normal duties and they are regularly required to provide social reports to the courts on an offender's character and background. Further, the current high divorce rate has involved probation officers in the rapidly growing role of Domestic/Divorce Court welfare work.

So our probation service is a comprehensive one. Richard's account of a typical day in the life of a probation officer can only hint at the frighteningly wide range of his demanding tasks.

FGR

'One Divorce Court request for a report on the welfare of children; social enquiry reports for the Crown Court on a couple of burglaries; two juvenile reports — one assault, one for taking cars without consent — both for next Thursday. Oh, and there's a new case to be allocated: she got two years on probation last Friday for shoplifting. Twenty three year old single parent: she's on social security and Mogadon, and one of her kids is on an interim care order to the Local Authority. Apparently they found some bruising of the kid's face. So she's not very keen on social workers. Anyone fancy taking this one?'

Redundant and lonely

The allocation of new work completed, John gathers his files together ready for Court. He has prepared a Social Enquiry Report at the request of the magistrates on Carlo Martini, a 51 year old Sicilian immigrant, separated, unemployed, in debt, charged with snatching a woman's purse in a department store, and unable to speak English. Made redundant five years beforehand from his job sweeping up at the local tyre factory, there is not much chance of him getting anything else now. His wife and children went back to Italy for a holiday two years earlier and never returned. Left alone, he let the condition of his home deteriorate, and now it is in a hopeless mess, badly in need of redecoration. The gas and electricity were cut off months ago, so he has to rely on paraffin heaters. Because of the cost of paraffin, and unable to explain his need for extra assistance to Social Security, he went without food and complains of stomach and chest pains. The mortgage repayments are £150 in arrears. He has no friends, and rarely goes out of the house. John has contacted the Honorary Vice-Consul for Italian Affairs in Midshires, and through her has spoken with the Italian Department of Social Security. They are willing to involve an Italian social worker and to offer financial assistance. On this basis, he has recommended in his report that the magistrate give Martini a conditional discharge. The Court finally gets around to dealing with Martini's case about midday. They read the probation report, and listen to the solicitor's speech in mitigation. But they note that it is the third time Martini has appeared before the Court for that kind of offence. While they recognise his need for help, and the fact that it has now been made available, they have to remember their duty to the public. Thirty days imprisonment. John's heart sinks . . .

Depressed and afraid

In the police cells beneath the court, the usual nauseating mixture of vomit and carbolic greets John's nostrils as he descends the staircase. All is bedlam.

Martini sits alone, depressed and afraid, on a hard, wooden bench waiting to be searched and entered into the custody book. Meanwhile, a burly police sergeant heaves a drunk across the floor and into a cell amid shouts of police harassment and brutality. Having relieved the drunk of his trousers belt, so he cannot hang himself, he bangs shut the cell door, then returns to his desk, and without blinking an eyelid, asks of Martini: 'Name?'

Cost of prison

John forlornly walks back to the Midshires office. He ponders to himself as he walks: it costs £80 a week to keep a man in prison. Martini will get a third remission for good behaviour, that's 20 days, say three weeks. Three times 80 is £240. Two hundred and forty pounds to keep Martini in prison for 20 days: and he will still have to face the same problems he has now when he is released. If it stops him snatching purses, perhaps it is money well spent. But will it? What if it makes things worse, makes him more desperate? As usual, John comes to no conclusions in the debate which seemingly perpetually rages within him.

Once back in the office, he places the Martini file under 'M' in the cabinet and slides the drawer shut. About to settle down and begin the task of bringing his case records up to date, the peace is suddenly shattered by the ring of the telephone. 'Mr Williams to see you,' announces the receptionist in an excited, sing-song tone which reveals her curiosity about what he wants this time. John wonders the same: his next reporting appointment is not until Friday.

Still has honour

Barry Williams is 25 and subject to a suspended prison sentence and a probation order for stealing lead. As he is shown to the interview room he hesitates, casts an uncertain glance at his probation officer, then announces: 'After you, Mr Hughes'.

John smiles, and nods, as he passes Barry who stands to attention, a guard of honour, at the doorway. Honour is what it is about. Barry wants to borrow £1: his social security Giro is not due until tomorrow and he is out of money for food. But he will not beg for it: he may be a lead thief, and he may be broke, but he still has honour. Ordered to leave home by his parents two years ago, he now lives a life only a few steps removed from vagrancy. His parents were constantly rowing when he was younger, and still are for all he knows. There was a lot of violence too, not least towards Barry from his father. Now he moves from one 'doss house' to another, never staying anywhere for more than a month. Perhaps he is afraid that if he



Richard Green has been a member of the West Midlands County Probation and After Care Service for the past year and is a member of Wulfrun Branch of Toc H. He is a Cambridge graduate and qualified in social work after two years additional study at Leicester University. He has taught in Spain, been a Clayton Volunteer and a Toc H Long Term Volunteer in Peterborough.

stays longer, the full, terrible truth about himself will catch up with him . . .

Two o'clock: case conference on the Singh Dulai family. In addition to John and his senior, Mike, are present the following: health visitor and her senior; social worker and her senior; legal adviser; policewoman and her inspector; deputy headmaster; general practitioner. John, as the person who covered the conference, acts as chairman and opens it. He explains that he is involved with the Singh Dulai family because one of the children has been placed under his supervision by the Court for offences of theft. He understands that allegations of ill treatment have been made to the social services department by other children of the family. As the evidence is gathered, it seems that the problem centres on the conflict between the demands of the parents' conservative Eastern moral traditions, and the more liberal Western culture in which their children have been raised. Specifically, Kamaljit, the 15 year old daughter of the family wants to go out with boy friends of her own choosing, and to dress according to the latest fashion. But if allowed to do this by her parents, they would be scorned by their own people for bringing up their daughter as a 'prostitute'. It appears that Kamaljit slipped out unnoticed one evening, and on her return was given a beating by her father. Hence the allegation of ill treatment. Like so many of her friends, Kamaljit is caught against her will between two cultures, between turban and Travolta.

On the block

The meeting drags on as all the evidence is gathered together. Finally, the legal

/cont

cont from p9/

adviser concludes there is insufficient evidence to prosecute, and the police agree. But it is felt that the situation must be carefully monitored, and a system of regular communication set up between all those involved in accordance with the recommendations made after the Maria Colwell inquiry. Someone must act as 'key worker' to collate all information, but nobody welcomes the responsibility of such a role. All are painfully aware that if blame has to be proportioned in the future, it is the key worker's neck that is on the block! Unfortunately, criticising social workers is a national sport these days, especially in the press: nobody is going to fall over himself to be placed in a position like that. Each 'helping professional' carefully explains his or her responsibility in the case, but equally carefully tries to pass on the key worker role to someone else. Finally, someone will give in. But amid all the politics of the situation, John wonders whatever happened to the children...

Back on drugs

He returns to his office: time for home. The telephone rings again. Brian Porter's wife is in tears: she has found some syringes in his pocket, so he must be back on the drugs again. She has had enough, and wants to leave him. On his way to the Porters' home, John passes once more through the 'red light' district, as he had done in the morning. Only now it is dark, and the street is coming to life. A female figure, so far alone, stands against the wall of the Black Boar. She smiles and waves as John's car passes by. He smiles back: at least he's not the only one still at work. He makes a mental note: he must get those case records up to date tomorrow. 'B... paperwork!' he sighs.

*All names and details in this account are fictitious.

Obituary

August:

T Frank Baigent (Tunbridge Wells)

November:

Ethel Gray (Beds & North Herts District)

E W 'Ted' Hann (Crewkerne)

Evelina Harris (St Austell)

Thomas S Wragg (Bakewell)

December:

Alan Fryers (Felpham)

Mary I L Goodman (Hunstanton)

Isabella S Hudspith (Edinburgh Seventy Five)

Rev M McCallum (Duns)

Josephine M Say (Formerly of Bath)

January:

Ron Airey (Rochdale)

John Bridgeman (Denton)

Dorothy Bryant (Ipswich)

Charles F Coates (Catterick Village)

George E Dipple (Bideford)

Harry C Enderby (Earley)

Maurice W Evans (Lowestoft)

George S Fraser (Kennington, London)

Elizabeth M Greenwood (Rochdale)

Frances E Ingle (Milford-on-Sea)

Mary O Latherton (Exmouth)

Ethel W Orpin (Luton)

John D Pearce (Sevenoaks)

Cyril Pellow (Looe)

William H Price (Rhiwbina)

F Harold Spurdle (Lyne Bay District)

Victor R Tolhurst (Gillingham)

February:

Albert V G Adams (Newton Abbot)

Sydney A Austin (Whetstone & Finchley)

Edith M Brooman (Parkhurst)

E M 'Jackie' Jackson (Richmond, Surrey)

W F 'Wally' Sheepwash (Gillingham)

S Woodcock (Plymouth)

Sister Verity CSA, of Malmesbury, has written to tell us of the death last November of Sister Janet. Before joining the Community in 1935, she was Jessie Ann Jenvey of Solihull, at one time Pilot of the Birmingham Area of LWH. Sister Janet was still active in Toc H through the 1950s. We have written to the Community to express our sympathy to all who have known and loved Sister Janet in the centres where she has lived and worked.

Len Golding, a member of Crawley Branch for the past 20 years, died recently at the age of 91. Len's active involvement with Toc H goes back to 1931 and he was first registered as a member at Lowdham, near Nottingham in 1935. Most of his working life was spent in the prison and Borstal service and his particular Toc H concerns were always with the blind and with war pensioners. His many friends miss him greatly and Crawley Branch feel they have lost a strong and wise counsellor.

Edinburgh 75 Branch have written to say how deeply they miss their member, friend and Jobmaster, **Isabel Hudspith**. During the last two years of her life, Isabel was a cancer sufferer but she never stopped working. She became a source of great comfort to other terminal patients and she raised funds for cancer research — £700 by her own personal efforts. She was widely known and loved among all the city's caring organisations and these have already raised large sums for cancer research in her memory.

We give thanks for their lives

Photo: Gravesend & Dartford Reporter



Gravesend branches' second successful mini-handi. This time as many young people as possible were enrolled as helpers and partners. They came from St Mary's Youth Club, 11th Gravesend Scout Group and Red Cross cadets. Despite appalling weather, all but five of the guests arrived by Toc H minibus, Red Cross ambulances and a fleet of cars. The Mayor of Gravesend was present throughout the varied programme for the day. All this, plus a home going present for each guest, was made possible by the generosity of local firms and shops and all branches in Medway and Sheppey District.



Scene at a party and entertainment mounted by Denbigh (Clwyd) Joint

Branch for mentally handicapped people in their area.



Welcome

The following branches elected new members during February:

- 3 — Finchley & Whetstone (w), Harpenden (j)
- 2 — North Sussex District, Orston & Newark (j), Warrington District
- 1 — Bognor Regis (m), Coningsby (j), Culcheth Aquarius (Warrington) (j), Eastbourne (w), Gemini (Warrington) (Warrington) (j) group, Hartley Wintney (m), Hartley Wintney (w), Kennington (London) (j), Kettering (m), Leicester (w), Melton Mowbray Mowbray (m), Mill Hill (m), Rushden Rushden Pytchley (w), Somerton (j), Tower Hill (j), Uckfield (m), Warrington & District Youth Action (j) group, Wigmore (w)

A warm welcome to 30 new members

Just a reminder of the early 1979 weather! This group of singers toured a Luton housing estate, each bringing with him food and drink for himself and one other. At the end of the evening, they adjourned to swallow hot soup, count their gains and and carry on the party! The group included Toc H and local church members, cubs and brownies, Girl Guides and Youth Youth club members. After a donation to the vicar, proceeds went to the planned summer playscheme.

Please Note Help!

Wanted two helpers to care for a severely handicapped couple — both Toc H members — on a holiday in Swanage from 21 to 28 July. They must be drivers (the vehicle is a Bedford specially adapted to take wheel chairs). All helpers' expenses will be paid. The couple would prefer helpers over the age of 25, though this is not essential.

New start at Parkstone

A determined effort is being made to start a new Toc H group in the Parkstone/Poole (Dorset) area. Local research is promising so far. Elizabeth Bacon would welcome any introductions to people who might be interested to help. Please contact Elizabeth directly at: 24 Purbeck Heights, Mount Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset, BH12 0QP. (Tel: 0202-743405).



Members of Sevenoaks Toc H and the Hard of Hearing Club presenting blankets to the Dyne Home for older people in Kemsing. This presentation was the outcome of a long period of co-operation. Toc H helped the Hard of Hearing Club

to buy a projector and provided them with film shows throughout the winter. They in turn presented Toc H with the blankets — very welcome to Dynes Home residents who, said the Matron, 'like blankets to wrap round their knees!'

Open Forum

FAMILY MATTERS

Some readers have found these articles irritating; others write to say how much they value them. Generally speaking, the latter group are those who treat them as parables, based on life experience and written to make a general and very personal point; the former tend to look on them as factual news items or simply disagree with the viewpoint of the writer. Perhaps I should again emphasize the fact that Gina's views — like those of all our contributors — are her own and not necessarily those of the Toc H Movement.

— Editor

In January's *Point Three* Gina Vianney decries the lack of gratitude shown by children to parents who 'sacrifice' their own pleasures for the sake of their offspring. Her solution is to 'withdraw the privilege', whatever that means.

It seems to me that countless millions of parents who do not claim her advantage of 'conversion' see the matter differently; Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Pagans or just plain heathens like me. Even animals rear their young uncomplainingly!

Surely the finest compliment our children can pay us is to be totally unaware of any need for gratitude. If we have done our job as parents — a role we freely chose to adopt — we will have built an environment of security, understanding and mutual respect which comes so naturally, and is so constant and dependable that it warrants no recognition whatsoever. Do we feel grateful for the air that we breathe?

From the moment our babies learn to stand they are learning to stand on their own two feet. When we teach them to walk, we are teaching them to walk away from us. When we give them the gift of speech it is to express their own independence.

If we do our work well as parents we are only repaying the debt we owe our own parents. When we see our children bringing up their children more wisely than we have done we are rewarded. To see our grandchildren growing daily in beauty of body, mind and spirit we are blessed.

To perform duty with expectation of reward, to give with hope of benefit is to deny our giving.

We all have a constant battle between our need to express our individuality and our need to 'belong'. Adolescence amplifies this problem enormously. The adolescent finds himself between two worlds, that of the child and that of the adult, neither of which does he fit into. During this time he needs to break the bonds of the parental

control in order to find himself. His attempts to do so are often inept, clumsy and crude; often it is expressed as disrespect and ingratitude that can, and does, hurt. We may well be tempted to retaliate; to remind them of their 'debt' to us, to withdraw our support: but this is the very time our constancy and understanding are most valuable. When we are torn between conflicting pressures, when we doubt our own stability, it is the world that appears to fluctuate; not us. Our greatest need is for something strong, unwavering and reliable to cling to. Even if we are at the same time trying to reject it.

Life itself has a way of 'shaking' us, usually when we least expect it and most deserve it. We do not always have the wisdom to administer our own justice either in the right doses or at the right time.

When our children come to parenthood in their own right they very quickly appreciate the cost, and in turn repay life for whatever we have contributed to theirs.

We do our duty to life itself, or whatever deity we recognise as representing the life force: that force itself rewards us. Duty is an acknowledgement of the debt we owe to life. We cannot use it as an investment or as an insurance policy. If we learn to give and serve without expectation of reward we have learned a great deal of what life is about.

As the very core of whatever little faith I may have is the certainty that when we cast our bread upon the waters it is returned unto us in abundance; but not, I suspect, if we sit perpetually on the seashore counting crusts.

Peter Pascoe
Thurrock, Essex

This reader tells us she has been increasingly incensed by what she sees as the style and tone of 'Family Matters' and that the February article was the last straw! — Editor.

... Gina Vianney writes first of her friend being pestered by obscene phone calls for some months. Of course, it might not be easy to monitor calls from a call box but surely someone knew that phone numbers can be changed and one can become ex-directory.

Even more astonishing is the story of her own caller, Francis, whom she states, has pestered her for five years!

Pray for him, by all means, but surely she does not think she is doing anyone good, least of all the fellow, by allowing him the free use of her phone number.

Here again, have the calls monitored if possible, change the number and become ex-directory. Reading the article, surely she has a duty to her daughter to protect her from such a person, but the happening she mentions could affect the girl for life. The fellow too, has been able to dial her number unhindered for so long, I imagine the effect on him would be that of encouragement to phone others.

I have every sympathy with anyone who has received such calls — and believe me, I know full well that a man can be a recipient as well as a woman. A suggestion — leave a powerful, ear-splitting whistle by the phone, and if such a call is suspected, a good, hearty blast down the mouthpiece might scare him off...

Miss D Haxell
Westminster

One cannot but sympathize with Gina Vianney (February issue) and others who have been pestered or attacked in the ways she described. There seems, however, to be a contradiction in what Gina says about the reason for such happenings: at one point she refers (correctly, I would say) to an obscene telephone caller as being ill, but she concludes by suggesting that such people are under the control of the Devil. I was sad to read such mediaeval language in 1979 in *Point Three*. Your readers may recall that, a year or two ago in Bavaria, a Roman Catholic priest faced criminal charges in connection with his attempt to 'exorcise the Devil' from a woman who, according to expert medical evidence, had been suffering from mental illness. She died as a result of not having been given medical treatment.

Peter B Johnson
Beckenham, Kent

CHILE

It is now my turn to feel shame: to read a letter (see February *Point Three*) by an Englishman who has had no experience or real knowledge of a subject, but bases his opinions on information of biased groups and possibly embittered people who have lost in the war against Communism in this country, and are, for the time being, in exile.

For it was war, let this be realised. The general idea seems to be that torturing was a form of sport and the chief aim of the upheaval. What unforgivable ignorance! Not innocence.

In the incredible letter that I am answering it says that I 'advocate a

Opinions expressed in these columns (including any editorial comment) are those of the contributor and not necessarily those of the Toc H Movement. We reserve the right to edit letters. Only letters carrying the correspondent's full name and address will be considered for publication.

government guilty of torture and imprisonment without trial'. I flatly deny doing this. It shames me to think anyone could be so unjust as to change the meaning of my words. As for suggesting that I am deluded, what an unreasonable remark! We have lived here all my life. Has the Western Press gone through what I have gone through? This does not even bear discussion. It is too absurd. The letter quotes 'people who are still persecuted in Chile'. Is it persecution to try and control terrorism? Should people be allowed to hoard up arms and plan attacks, and get encouragement for it as badly brought up children are? Before giving opinions it is advisable for people to *know* both sides of the question and not only the very clever propaganda that has managed to poison the minds of so many against this country.

'If she has property in Chile' is another quotation from that strange letter I had, but it was wrenched from my family in the most inhuman way for no legal reason at all, 'without trial' in other words. Naturally Communist propaganda does not mention this, but millions of people suffered this robbery from the former Government and many, many died of sheer heartbreak and lost all they had.

If the Military Government had not come in, this country would not exist as such, but would just be a part of something else. Of course sympathizers with the former Government are upset, but we who appreciate our independence are very happy.

Lucilla (Trudgett) Recart
Santiago, Chile

EXTENSION

May I, through the columns of *Point Three*, elaborate what I had in mind concerning advertising, when I put my question to the Central Council in November, and thus add to the present discussion which you started in February's edition?

I had several ideas in mind at the Council, but unfortunately was not given an opportunity to 'come back' at Frank Rice, nor to put a 'supplementary question', but I think he got the wrong idea of what I intended to suggest.

I agree with him that advertising in the national newspapers such as 'Toc H is good for you, so are baked beans' would make a nonsense of what we know to be a serious Movement, and would do more harm than good.

There are, however, many other more subtle ways of getting our name and Movement across. One of them was

contained in my original question, which was concerned with postal slogans on envelopes, offering help where needed, but this fact, unfortunately, was omitted.

Another suggestion is, why not send frequent letters or advertisements to selected and specific magazines for the disabled, the aged, the blind (in braille), and Christian magazines, offering Toc H help from the nearest branch, thereby giving help where needed, and at the same time, getting publicity?

If such publicity brought in more members, some of them 'unsuitable', as has been suggested, then surely any branch could sort out the wheat from the chaff and the chaff would blow away of itself.

I do not agree that 'new members are not the ultimate' because if we do not get them, we will become like the Portuguese Army, which is alleged to have more officers than 'other ranks'.

In my district there are several branches of about seven to ten mature members, many of them elderly and retired. Sooner or later they will join our Elder Brethren, as they must, and when that time comes, such branches will die, unless we, as a Movement can help them now.

I do not agree that 'we are not declining!' In South Wales at least, there are less than a quarter of the branches and membership that once we had, when I first came into the Movement.

Many of us wear our symbol of a lamp in our labels, but why do we hide the light of that lamp under a bushel, because like it or not, that is what we are doing? Are we ashamed of that light, and do we want to be regarded as some sort of secret society with a password before anyone can join?

I want to shout Toc H from the rooftops, metaphorically of course, as I am afraid of heights!

I would say to other members 'Let our light so shine before the public, that they may know of us, and see us for what we are, and what we stand for'.

John Pickard
Cardiff

May I express, through the medium of your columns, wholehearted endorsement of the views so aptly expressed by John Morgan on the subject of 'Extension' (in the February 'Open Forum'). It is gratifying to know that this highly important question is exercising the minds of some of our leading personalities. As things are at the present time the question of extension becomes of such importance that it needs to be given the utmost priority in every quarter. As I see

it, if that does not happen, there is little hope in the long run for Toc H to continue to survive and extend its influence amongst the community at large. After 50 years' membership it is very disheartening to find that in not a few places there is still an astounding ignorance, either of the existence of Toc H or of its having any appreciable influence on large sections of the community. Therefore, I can only trust that, before long, every branch (new or old) will be committed to achieving whatever extension lies in their power.

Jack Dare
Paignton, Devon

TICKET FOR A JOURNEY

I think that in Ken Prideaux-Brune we have a worthy successor to Tubby, Barclay Baron, Secretan and Monie as a writer of Toc H literature. *Ticket for a Journey* should be read and discussed in every branch; it reveals a deep insight into contemporary problems which comes from wide reading and digesting of facts and he serves them up to us in the clearest, most concise way possible. We should all resolve this New Year to read this latest in the long line of Toc H reviews and to act upon Ken's wise words.

Audrey Elvin
Huddersfield

DEMON DRINK

Having read Guy Brinkworth on page 13 of February *Point Three* I feel I must write as a depraved person who likes his pint of beer and an assiduous fermenter of plonk to provide a cheap weekend bottle of wine.

In a world which provides youngsters with a leap straight from school on to the dole queue, and beset with threats of internal and international strife, is it not nice that they can find something to sing about even if it does require a little Saturday night stimulus?

Your writer quotes some formidable statistics on expenditure on drink, but much of this is mere tax gathering. Is it not possible that if the state was less heavy handed on many of the workers' little pleasures we might hear less of inflation and industrial strife for more money?

Perhaps the first weekend each November at Swanwick needs looking into!

Howard Hall
Margate, Kent

Making Europe democratic

by Ernest Wistrich

Ernest Wistrich is the Director of the European Movement whose address is: Europe House, 1A Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HA.

June 1979 will see the world's first international elections. About 180 million citizens from nine European Community countries will be electing 410 members to the European Parliament. By this unique act the European Community, like its Member Countries, will itself become transformed into a parliamentary democracy. This historic event will be an important step on the road to real European unity as envisaged by the founding fathers of the European Community.

Inspired by Winston Churchill's call in 1946 in Zurich to create 'a sort of United States of Europe', 1,000 of Europe's leading citizens met at a Congress of Europe at The Hague in 1948. They included statesmen and politicians, Church leaders and academics, industrialists and trades unionists, from 20 European countries, who were determined to end Europe's internecine wars which twice this century laid waste to our Continent and killed tens of millions of its citizens. After three days of deliberations they resolved to work for the creation of a European cultural and economic union.

To pursue their objective they founded The European Movement, which now exists in 18 countries and which, over the past 30 years, has worked to promote the objective of a united Europe.

In Britain the European Movement has worked ceaselessly to ensure British participation in the European venture. It

led the campaign for British membership in 1970/72, and set up the Britain in Europe organisation which conducted the successful referendum campaign in favour of our continued membership in 1975.

The European Movement in Britain has as its patrons the leaders of the three main political parties and amongst its members some 330 Members of Parliament representing an overall majority in the House of Commons. Its principal task is to inform the British public of the consequences of membership of the European Community and urge their active participation in the life and affairs of Europe.

To this end it is now engaged in an intensive public information campaign on the forthcoming European elections. The campaign is designed to ensure a wide understanding of the purpose of the elections, their importance in giving Europe's citizens a direct say in Community affairs and an exposition of the way Community policies affect the interests and lives of us all. The object is to secure the highest possible public participation on election day.

Why an elected European Parliament?

First, because this is a requirement of the Treaty which established the European Community. Second, because of the growing responsibilities of the European Community in most spheres of our daily lives. The affairs of the European Community are managed by the European Commission which is independent of Member States. It is responsible for proposing European legislation and then carrying it out once it has been enacted. The Commission, which is an amalgam of a political executive and an international civil service, cannot be held democratically accountable in nine separate national parliaments. Up to now it has been held responsible for its actions in the present European Assembly which consists of 198 nominated Members representing national parliaments. The MPs serve on a part time basis and are selected, recalled and replaced by their respective national parliamentary parties. They do not represent their constituents in Europe but only their national parliaments to which they owe a primary loyalty. As a result their authority is limited and their consultative role in the European Community subsidiary to that of the Commission and the Council of Ministers. An elected European Parliament with a direct democratic mandate from

the citizens of Europe will acquire a new authority and influence in European affairs. The European bureaucracy will be held much more closely accountable for its actions.

At present final decisions and legislation in the European Community are the responsibility of the Council of Ministers representing Member Governments. Whilst each Minister may be held individually accountable for his actions in his own national parliament, the collective decisions of the whole Council, arrived at after bargaining and compromise, cannot be subjected to parliamentary approval by nine separate national parliaments. It is in this sphere that the elected European Parliament is bound to acquire new responsibilities. Even now differences on Community legislation between the European Assembly and the Council of Ministers are resolved by negotiation between the two Institutions.

It is inevitable that after the elections the European Parliament will gradually acquire the rights and powers of co-decision with the Council of Ministers in a way which is familiar in the United States of America, where legislation has to be agreed between the Senate and the House of Representatives before it can be enacted. Whenever the two bodies disagree a joint session of Congress has to resolve the conflict. In the European Community this process of 'concertation' is already conducted informally between the Council of Ministers and Parliament. It is inevitable that this method of joint and agreed legislation will become official practice soon after the elections.

The most important function of the elected Parliament will be to serve as the principal public forum of debate on European issues. The loyalty of the European MPs will be first and foremost to their constituents, then to their European political party groups and finally to making the European Community work in the interests of all its citizens.

Thus the elected Parliament will bring an entirely new dimension to European affairs. Working together with the Commission it will increase the authority of the Community Institutions and therefore correspondingly reduce the present excessive domination of Community affairs by Member Governments whose overriding interests are national. The present weaknesses of the European Community spring largely from the continued failure of national governments to reach agreements on the many vital common issues like agriculture, energy and foreign affairs. An overall European view on issues of common concern, backed by the authority of an elected Parliament, is much more likely to ensure a constructive Community working in the interests of Europe and indeed for the rest of the world too.

Note

1. On 1 January 1973, Britain, the Irish Republic and Denmark joined the original 'Six' in the European Community.
2. In June 1975, following re-negotiation of the entry terms, British membership was endorsed by a more than two to one majority in the first national referendum to be held in Britain. In this referendum, some 65% of those eligible did cast a vote.
3. On 7 June 1979, elections to the European Parliament will be held.
4. Were the members of the majority voting in the 1975 referendum wrong? Should you vote in the European elections or abstain? What do you think? — Editor.

What a disappointment !

by Sir Robin Williams Bt

Sir Robin Williams is Hon Sec of the 'Safeguard Britain Campaign' whose HQ is at 52 Fulham High Street, London, SW6 3LQ. Formed by most of those organisations which campaigned for a 'NO' vote in the 1975 referendum, its aims are to uphold Britain's interests in the Common Market and to oppose federalism.

Experience of the Common Market has proved very different from the prospect held out to us before Britain joined. A justified reaction has set in because the reality has proved so different from the promises. Big changes are needed to put our relationship with the EEC on to a sensible footing.

Trade

Mr Heath in his White Paper of July 1971 said 'the Government are confident that the effect on our balance of trade will be positive and substantial'.

Well, what has happened? Before we joined the Common Market our trade with the six countries of the EEC was roughly in balance. Since we joined this balance has turned into a large deficit with imports from the 'Six' growing faster than our sales to them. In each of the last five years we have had a deficit with the EEC 'Six' of £2,000 millions or more in visible trade. Partly this is because Common Market rules prevent us buying food inexpensively from countries like Australia and compel us instead to buy more expensive food supplies from the Continent. However, an important part of the deficit is due to the worsening balance of trade in manufactures with the 'Six'. In 1970 before joining the EEC we had a surplus in trade in manufactured goods with the 'Six' of £161 millions. Since joining this surplus has turned into a deficit that has exceeded £1,000 millions in each of the last three years.

The same sad story is repeated if we look at our invisible trade with the EEC: our former surplus has turned into a deficit (£297 millions in 1977).

Food Prices

Whilst we were assured that the Common Market would increase prices by only small amounts, the fact is that we are paying *much more* for imported food due to Common Market rules. Naturally other factors have been at work as well: there has been world wide inflation including the increased cost of oil which affects the transport of foodstuffs all the way to the shops.

Prices in the Common Market are powerfully influenced by the electorally important French farmers, who are high cost producers. As a result the EEC sets agricultural prices far above the price on the free world market. Imports from third countries outside the EEC are subject to taxes to bring the price up to the EEC level. For example, the British loaf is made from hard wheat grown in North America and the EEC tax on this wheat imported into Britain is now very high. As the Financial Times reported on 19 January, US hard winter wheat delivered costs £86.30 a ton on which the EEC levy is £44.65 a ton ie an EEC import tax of over 50% which would not exist if we were outside the Common Market. The EEC tax is even higher on beef, butter and cheese — over 100%. These taxes are intended to and do prohibit imports from Australia and elsewhere to the detriment alike of their farmers and our consumers.

In the meantime Common Market farmers produce food too expensive for consumers to afford and the resulting surplus has to be given away with the aid of export subsidies. Currently the EEC is selling 20,000 tonnes of butter to Russia and another 4,000 tonnes to Poland with the aid of an export subsidy of 47.3p a lb paid for by the taxpayer. If we were out of the EEC we could receive this EEC butter at the same cheap price; but inside we are tied to the high price regime.

The Paymaster of Europe

This is what we are about to become despite the soothing reassurances expressed before we joined. The EEC budget is largely raised by import taxes on food and other goods purchased from outside the Market. As Britain is the biggest importer of food stuffs, it follows that a large share of the revenue is levied on imports into Britain. These taxes do not go to the British Exchequer; they are paid into the EEC budget. The bulk of this money is spent on agricultural subsidy within the Common Market. As Britain has proportionately the fewest farmers, it follows that Britain gets comparatively little back compared with her large payments. In 1978 we paid in £1,286 millions and received back £555 millions — a net contribution of no less than £730 millions. This is money that is paid away across the exchanges as a burden on our balance of payments. Our receipts are sometimes described as a benefit of membership when some EEC grant is announced. It is not always explained that it is our own money coming back to us after the EEC authorities have collared the lion's share for other purposes.

What About Peace?

As these economic results are so bad, we are beginning, once again, to hear the suggestion that we have to be in the Common Market because of peace. Indeed the claim was made recently that the EEC is responsible for 30 years uninterrupted peace — though the Common Market was set up only in 1958! The truth is that peace in Western Europe has endured since 1945 because the countries concerned have got together with the United States and Canada in defence arrangements that have benefited us all and have deterred the Soviets from any further move forward. The Treaty of Rome, which created the EEC, says nothing about defence; it is dishonest to attribute to the Common Market credit for defence arrangements that have nothing to do with it.

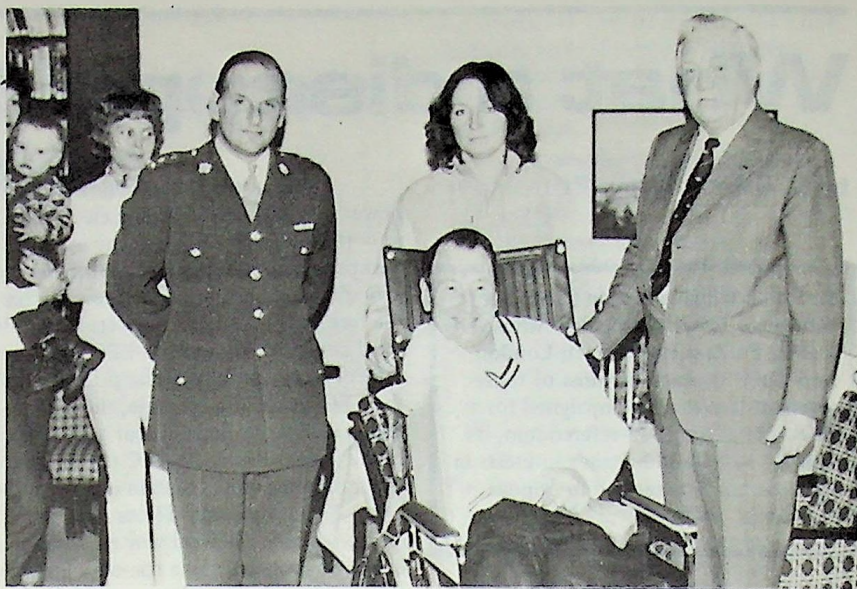
Interestingly enough our relations with Western Europe are constantly made more difficult as a result of our being in the EEC. Frequent disputes are caused by the attempt to apply common rules on fishing, farming and on other matters where Britain's interests are so different from those of the original 'Six'. Attempting to accommodate ourselves to the harmonizing rules and regulations that pour out of Brussels causes continuous exasperation. Freed from these causes of friction, Britain would be on happier terms with her neighbours.

The Way Ahead

1. Amend the 1972 European Communities Act to restore to the House of Commons the power to decide whether any EEC regulation or directive should apply in Britain.
2. Change the Common Agricultural Policy to enable us to import food freely from outside the EEC.
3. Keep industrial free trade which already applies to Sweden, Norway, Finland, Switzerland, Austria and Portugal who sensibly chose co-operation with the EEC instead of membership of it.
4. Transform the Brussels bureaucracy into a co-ordinating secretariat which could do useful work for us all. This would reduce the number of highly paid officials and their opportunities for throwing their weight around issuing regulations for us to comply with.
5. Recognize that in an inter-dependent world solutions are beyond the scope of the EEC alone. International problems should be met by international co-operation and not by supra-national authorities.
6. Work for a wider and more sensible association of European nations, freely co-operating among themselves and with other nations of the world.

A wheel-chair for Jimmy

by Bob Peyton-Bruhl



In February 1974 the Paymaster of the 17th/21st Lancers, then based here in Wolfenbittel, told me about Jimmy Kelly, an ex-RAF man, who was in a home for disabled people in Brunswick. Since that time Elsie, my wife, and I have tried to visit Jimmy at least once a month. We procured a special sponge rubber mattress for him which did much to relieve the agony of bed sores which plagued him. A visit to Jimmy was always a tonic. A sufferer from multiple sclerosis for 25 years, he has been totally bedridden for the last seven years with progressively less ability to do even the most simple things for himself. He has also had the anguish of knowing that his German wife Friedel is dying of cancer. His obvious delight at having visitors is very moving and he loves to talk of the happenings of the world outside, particularly football, but sees very little of it through the window of his room.

However, two events have recently occurred, which have an important bearing on the circumstances of Jimmy's life.

We introduced Sam Adair, a teacher at our local Army School here, and his charming wife Marie to Jimmy

and they have become regular visitors.

The second event was a scheme introduced by the German Red Cross. This was a special card entitling Jimmy to six outings a month but to take advantage of this scheme he had to have a wheelchair.

During the first week in December 1978 the idea of collection at the Northampton Barracks, home of the 16th/5th The Queens Royal Lancers and our Toc H club was mooted. Toc H agreed to sponsor the collection and act as treasurers. The response was astounding. Within 15 days £372 was collected from members of the Regiment, supported by members of the 14th Signals Unit Detachment based near the East German border. The Royal Military Police Detachment at Helmstedt, 20 miles up the Autobahn, which is also the location of Check Point Alpha, the entry point into the Russian Controlled Corridor to Berlin, donated the collection from their Christmas Carol Service as did the Garrison Church of our own Regiment.

The Chair bearing a Regimental Car Badge of the 16th/5th L and provided with a set of sponge rubber cushions and

a special adjustable safety harness was presented to Jimmy on 4 January by Lt Lt Col The Honourable N C L Vivian, of the 16th/5th, The Queens Royal Lancers.

The presentation ceremony was held in the Brunswick Home in the presence of members of the home staff and the Officer Commanding 14th Signals Unit Detachment. I was there too, as were Sam and Marie Adair who gave unstintingly of their time and the use of their car.

Jimmy's joy and delight, sent us all home happy in the knowledge, that for him, the start of 1979 suddenly opened the prospect of new vistas in the outside world: his biggest thrill will be the chance to visit the Eintracht Braunschweig Stadium to see them playing the great football clubs of Germany, such as Bayern Munchen, Herta Berlin and S V Hamburg who number among their players European Footballer of the Year, England's own Kevin Keegan.

Note: Bob Peyton-Bruhl is Warden of the Toc H Club Wolfenbittel in BAOR.

Small Ads

Small advertisements must be received (with remittance) five weeks before publication day, which is the 23rd of the preceding month. The charge is 3p a word (minimum 30p) to Point Three Magazine. Rates of display advertisements can be obtained from the Editorial Office, Toc H, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Bucks. Telephone: 0296 623911.



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